

On structural power

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ABSTRACT

This article engages Rainer Forst's account of structural power, as elaborated in *Normativity and Power: Analyzing Social Orders of Justification*. Its central claim is that structural power works, not only through what Forst calls 'justificatory narratives', but also through institutionalized and objectified social norms. When norms are institutionalized, they define incentive structures, which people internalize as motivational systems. When they are objectified, they produce intersubjectively shared, practical know-how, which people learn corporeally. Forst's commitment to a cognitivist account of power limits his capacity to explain structural power, since social structures work, not just through, but also around human cognition.

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Relations of power that are structural in form pose pressing political problems and present unique challenges. Think of structural racism, as manifest in places like Flint or Ferguson. Or think of patriarchy, as institutionalized in family law, in workplace policies and in the gendered norms that circulate through popular culture. Studying power can be relatively straightforward when (to recall Robert Dahl's famous formulation) it is exercised by powerful agents who get the powerless to do what they otherwise would not (Dahl 1957, pp. 202, 203). But when power is exercised through multiple, interacting, large-scale social processes, analyzing it becomes more challenging. Structural relations of power are also particularly difficult to change. It is one thing to confront a landlord who discriminates against a would-be tenant, or a boss who sexually harasses his employee, but it is quite another to redress racial inequalities that have been institutionalized over centuries, or to dismantle a system of deeply entrenched, interlocking, inegalitarian gender norms.

In contemporary social and political theory, the question of how to study structural power has provoked sustained debate. More than four decades ago, Steven Lukes made the case that power stops where structure begins. On his view, power relations necessarily involve powerful agents, who are morally responsible for the effects of power's exercise. Lukes writes:

[A]n attribution of power is at the same time an attribution of (partial or total) responsibility for certain consequences. The point, in other words, of locating power is to fix responsibility for consequences held to flow from the action, or inaction, of certain specifiable agents. (Lukes [1974] 2005, p. 58)

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More recently, Philip Pettit has taken a similar stance. On his view, domination is a direct relationship between dominator and dominated; it ‘cannot be the product of “a system or network or whatever”’ (Pettit 1997, p. 52).¹ In short, for Lukes and for Pettit, power and domination are, necessarily, interagentive. On their view, scholars need a different concept – structural constraint, perhaps, or oppression – if they want to analyze and criticize social limits to human freedom that are not directed and controlled by clearly identifiable individual or collective agents.

In *Normativity and Power: Analyzing Social Orders of Justification*, Rainer Forst adopts the opposite view. On his account, those who study power and domination must analyze ‘cultural and ... economic structures and relationships’ (Forst 2017, p. 17). The critical theorist’s task, Forst writes, is to identify ‘structures and relationships that are not reciprocally and generally justifiable, and those which render a practice of justification impossible as a political process’ (Forst 2017, p. 17). Of his own understanding of what he calls ‘noumenal power’, he underscores that ‘[a]n important test of [its] realism ... is whether it can explain the power of “structures”’ (Forst 2017, p. 44). Hence, rather than adopt an agentic-centric understanding of power and domination, he adopts a view that draws attention to institutionalized and objectified social norms that interact to define power relations that significantly shape social action.

Forst’s attention to structural power is, arguably, his most important contribution in this new book. Critical theory tends to be insufficiently attentive to structural forms of power and domination, and *Normativity and Power* offers an important corrective. Nevertheless, in the pages that follow, I want to suggest that Forst does not go far enough down this path that he begins to tread: that his commitment to a cognitivist account of power prevents him from fully realizing his stated aim of ‘explain[ing] the power of structures’. I begin, in the first section, with an overview of Forst’s account of how structural power works: an account that centers on what he calls ‘justification narratives’ that become institutionalized in the form of doxic norms. In the second section, I focus on one example of a justification narrative that Forst cites – the narrative of the ‘true American’ – to point to the limits of his cognitivist account of structural power. In the third and final section, I sketch an alternative: an account of structural power that centers on its capacity to work, not only through, but also *around* cognition, shaping social action by defining both incentive structures and also what Sewell (1992) calls ‘schemas’. If critical theory is to come to terms with the problem of structural power, my claim is, it must move beyond a cognitivist understanding of power and domination. More generally, it must move beyond its near-exclusive focus on the discursive realm as the site of power.

1. Stories and structures

How does structural power work? More specifically:

- (1) how are structural relations of power established,
- (2) how do they affect people’s capacities to act, and
- (3) how can they be dismantled?

Rainer Forst’s answer to the first of these three questions centers on what he calls justification narratives (Forst 2017, ch. 3). Human beings are ‘beings *who tell stories*’, he writes (Forst 2017, p. 55), emphasis as in original). In our capacity as social actors, we do not function

like moral philosophers, articulating abstract principles and then offering arguments and reasons that support them. Instead, we embed our reasoning, as well as our endorsement of particular principles, in ‘historically saturated’ narratives, which do much of the work that is required to convey them (Forst 2017, p. 57). An example Forst offers is a narrative in the form of what Rogers Smith (2003) has called a ‘story of peoplehood’. Like Smith, Forst underscores that multiple such narratives compete with one another at any given time and place to represent ‘the’ story of a particular people. For example, he writes, the narrative construction of ‘the “true America(n)”’ is an ‘unfinished and controversial process’ (Forst 2017, p. 62). Stories of American peoplehood ‘spring from social conflicts and continue to refer to them, even where they strive to represent them as being completed’ (Forst 2017, p. 62).

Justification narratives function to legitimize social orders. In other words, they present as good, right, or otherwise desirable the norms that comprise the social structures that organize collective life. Think of the narrative of the ‘true American’ told by Donald Trump in the early days of his presidency. This story aimed to legitimize immigration bans, deportation policies, massive cuts to social welfare programs, and other major changes to the American political and legal structure, and it did so in ways that illustrate one of Forst’s important points: a justification narrative can legitimize a social order *for bad reasons*. In Forst’s words, ‘the narrative reference to a or “the” history’ of a particular people ‘is not sufficient to justify whether the correct conclusion was drawn from it’ (Forst 2017, p. 57). He elaborates:

... power always unfolds in the space of communication, though this does not mean that it is well founded. It is always discursive in character, and the struggle for power is a struggle over the possibility of structuring, or even dominating the store of justifications on which others can draw. Its *modus operandi* is cognitive but not necessarily reflective. (Forst 2017, p. 63)

In short, although humans are ‘beings who tell stories’, our stories can serve as conduits for reasons and principles that, were they subjected to the test of critical analysis, would not withstand it, and that most certainly would not withstand the test of free, inclusive, and reasoned deliberation.

But narratives that convey bad reasons can become, to borrow Forst’s language ‘condensed’. In other words, they can be institutionalized and objectified in structural form. When that happens, people who participate in the relationships that those institutionalized and objectified narratives define can come to regard the social order that they produce as the only possible order. Thus Forst’s answer to the second of the three questions posed above (how does structural power affect people’s capacities to act?) centers on what he calls ‘everyday practice’ and processes of socialization:

Through their everyday workings, these structures limit what can be imagined as possible and – *pace* Habermas – themselves attain a certain lifeworld status as the way things are and will be. The normative power of the factual is reproduced by these structures, and it is a form of noumenal power – namely, justification through everyday practice and socialization into a certain frame of mind. (Forst 2017, p. 45)

In short, people’s capacities to act can be profoundly shaped by the structures that comprise a doxic social order.

Forst notes that this is the case even in those instances in which there is no agent who actively enforces that order. He offers the example of a patriarchal social structure within which ‘women may conform to patriarchal rules, even where the patriarch leaves things implicit or is absent, or no longer tries to dominate’ (Forst 2017, p. 45). But here he introduces

an important caveat: 'It is, however, more appropriate to speak of "influence" rather than "power" in cases where power is not intentionally exercised by persons over others' (Forst 2017, p. 45). To speak of power, on his view, is to speak of an agent who is positioned within a social order in such a way that she can use the norms that comprise that order as a resource. Institutionalized narratives, then, define both a normative structure and social positions within that structure, and they enable some agents to exercise power over others without explicitly justifying their actions.

Forst's answer to the third and final question posed above (how can structural power relations be dismantled?) is that change comes when critique targets institutionalized justification narratives. People change structural injustice by presenting alternative justification narratives, which challenge the narratives that undergird the extant order. They give different accounts of social and political life, that is, and they propose and offer reasons in support of different normative principles. For example, change might come from a feminist critique of a patriarchal justification narrative and the articulation of a feminist justification narrative. It might come from an anti-racist critique of a white supremacist justification narrative and the articulation of a racially egalitarian justification narrative. In any case, the principal task involved in dismantling structural injustice is to tell a story that supports normative principles that are reciprocal and justifiable to all. 'The real site of power struggles', Forst underscores, 'is the discursive realm' (Forst 2017, p. 46). To return to Trump's America, the task at hand, on Forst's view, is to identify and to critique the justification narratives that support the extant social order, and to challenge those stories with justification narratives that are reciprocal and acceptable to all. The task, in short, is to tell a better story.

2. The 'True American'

Of course, the above synopsis is a stylized presentation of the processes Forst analyzes: processes that rarely, if ever, evolve in a linear fashion. As Forst most likely would agree, people who exercise power by using the resources that social orders define, as well as people who articulate critiques of dominant social orders, are always already enabled and constrained by social structures that are, themselves, the product of justification narratives. In other words, the three answers to the three questions posed above represent, not steps that unfold discretely, so much as social processes that overlap with and interact with one another.

That said, the above sketch highlights what is most distinctive about the argument in *Normativity and Power*: that it attempts to articulate a thoroughly cognitivist account of how structural power functions. I now want to suggest that, on this count, the book is less than fully successful. To explain why, I will to begin by filling in a bit of detail about one of the 'historically saturated' narratives that Forst cites: the narrative of the 'true American' as it was institutionalized and objectified over the course of US history. I will focus, in particular, on the early decades of the twentieth century, which provide good examples of both the kind of contest over competing justification narratives that plays such a central role in Forst's account, and also the ascendancy of a narrative that won out, notwithstanding the fact that it was sustained by bad reasons (that is, by reasons that were not reciprocal and were not justifiable to all).

As is well known, from the colonial period through the turn of the last century, a thoroughly racialized narrative of the 'true American' legitimized extreme forms of racial domination and race-based hierarchy throughout the US, and especially in the American South.

That narrative was institutionalized in the American slave system, for example, and later in the Jim Crow racial caste system. When, in the 1910s and 1920s, black agricultural workers migrated from the rural South to northern cities like New York, Chicago and Detroit, white Americans began to revise the dominant racial justification narrative. They maintained its claims about the alleged biological basis of purportedly categorical racial differences, but they altered the list of the traits and behaviors that biologically-based blackness supposedly caused. For example, they begin to tell stories according to which black people suffer from 'a childlike helplessness in the matter of sanitation and housing,' rendering them unfit for homeownership – indeed, a threat to property values in the neighborhoods in which they live.² This revised twentieth century racial narrative played a critical role in justifying the construction of the black American ghetto, a spatial form that did not exist at the turn of the century, but was well-established in US cities just four decades after. Consider, for example, that, according to an influential American real estate textbook from the 1920s, the migration of Southern blacks to Northern cities 'naturally ... had a decidedly detrimental effect on land values,' making 'rigid segregation ... the only manner in which the difficulty could be effectively controlled' (Bingham and McMichael 1923, p. 181).

As Rainer Forst underscores, there is never a single justification narrative on offer in a given time and place. Not long after the publication of the real estate text cited above, influential actors within and beyond the US began to articulate important critiques of the American racial justification narrative. Some challenged that narrative at the level of scientific discourse, debunking the very notion of biologically-rooted and categorical racial differences: a notion that played a key role in legitimizing the unequal treatment of persons in the context of a supposedly egalitarian political society.³ Others challenged the racial justification narrative at the level of moral discourse. By the 1940s in the US, the association of racial domination with Nazism had helped delegitimize what the Fourth Report of the Commission to Study the International Organization of the Peace called '[t]he cancerous Negro situation in our country' (Commission to Study the International Organization of the Peace (1973 [1944]: 181). Gunnar Myrdal (1944, p. 997) was hardly alone when, in *An American Dilemma*, he predicted: 'There is bound to be a redefinition of the Negro's status in America as the result of [the Second World] War' (Myrdal 1944, p. 997).

Of course, Myrdal's view proved overly optimistic. The American racial story was durable, in part, due to its success in what Forst calls 'the discursive realm.' By the middle decades of the twentieth century, the racial narrative of the 'true American,' as revised by early century segregationists, had circulated extensively, not only through the professional publications of realtors, developers and bankers, but also through newspapers, magazines and other popular media. That said, the narrative's inertial force was largely the product of what Forst would call its 'condensation,' for example, its institutionalization in legal norms. A case in point is racial zoning ordinances: laws that prescribed where people could and could not live, based on their membership in particular racial categories.⁴ Another example is racially restrictive covenants: private agreements to refrain from selling or renting a property to members of particular racial groups, which were written into the deeds of properties and then backed by the coercive force of the American state. The American racial narrative was also institutionalized in government policies, like those of the US Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which insured mortgages only in racially segregated neighborhoods. And it was objectified in material forms, like the physical spaces of the black ghetto and the racially exclusive white enclave.

How did this narrative, once institutionalized and objectified, shape social action? Recall that, on Forst's view, structures always work through cognition. 'Noumenal power' is a matter of 'what goes on in the heads of those who are subjected' to it, he writes (Forst 2017, p. 40), stressing that power is '*the capacity of A to motivate B to think or do something that B would otherwise not have thought or done*' (Forst 2017, p. 40, emphasis as in original). Even when it is 'condensed', that is to say, even when it functions as structural constraint, on Forst's view, power's 'modus operandi is cognitive' (Forst 2017, p. 63).

I want to suggest, to the contrary, that structural power is at its most effective when it works *around* the cognition of who are those subjected to it. Consider FHA underwriting standards, which functioned as a particularly potent institutionalization of the American racial narrative. From the creation of the FHA in the mid-1930s, and for nearly three decades after – a period during which that agency not only insured mortgages for a third of new housing in the US, but also profoundly shaped the American private mortgage insurance market, and hence the nation's patterns of urban and suburban development – these standards specified that the estimate of a property's value must reflect the presence in the surrounding area of what the FHA called 'Adverse Influences', which it defined to include 'incompatible racial and social groups' (US Federal Housing Administration 1938, par. 937). The early twentieth century American racial narrative was institutionalized in FHA underwriting standards, which in turn insured that public investment would be channeled toward racially exclusive white enclaves. This institutionalized justification narrative profoundly shaped social action for black and white Americans, and it did so regardless of their beliefs about its truth or falsity, or its normative rightness. A black homebuyer who thoroughly disavowed the racial narrative of the 'true American' nevertheless would not qualify for a state-backed mortgage. Nor, for that matter, would a white homebuyer who was convinced by the scientific and/or the normative counter-narratives cited above. Just so long as she needed publicly-funded insurance to secure a mortgage to purchase a home, that white buyer was constrained to buy in a racially exclusive white enclave.

Rainer Forst acknowledges that people can be subjected to laws, norms and other social structures without endorsing the justificatory narratives that undergird them. They can be socialized 'into a certain frame of mind', he writes, and they can passively accept narratives that they learn through 'everyday practice'. Yet, because he is committed to a cognitivist account of structural power, he emphasizes that, even when people act from 'second nature' – that is, even when they act in accordance with institutionalized and objectified narratives – their action constitutes a *kind of* acceptance. They might not accept the justifications that support the relevant structures consciously, the claim is, but they do accept them on some level. In Forst's words: 'A "second nature" of acting (or "functioning") within certain structures presupposes acceptance of the rules of these structures, as well as certain justifications offered for them, such as ideas about property, cooperation, or efficiency, but also notions of fairness, desert, and the like' (Forst 2017, p. 44). He hastens to add that the relevant acceptance can be 'ideological'. It need not be based upon critical reflection. But even with that caveat, he misses the single most important political effect of what he calls the 'condensing' of justificatory narratives. Institutionalization and objectification enable stories, like the story of the 'true American', to do their work extra-discursively. A mid-century home buyer who was *wholly unaware* of the racial narrative that informed the FHA underwriting standards nevertheless was constrained to act as they prescribed.

When Forst uses the phrase ‘second nature’, then, when he speaks of ‘justification through everyday practice and socialization into a certain frame of mind’, what he means is unquestioning acceptance of, or unreflective adherence to, social norms that, on some level, the relevant subject comprehends. What is more, as noted above, he underscores that, for structural constraint to count as a form of *power* (as opposed to mere ‘influence’), those social norms must be acted upon by powerful agents who produce intended effects. This latter claim is puzzling, since Forst offers no reason why he views the intentionality of a powerful agent to be strictly necessary. Indeed, on this point, his view is a step backward from Lukes’s argument from the mid-1970s. Recall that Lukes offered a reason for claiming that power’s exercise requires control by a powerful agent – power’s alleged connection to moral responsibility. In addition, he underscored that intentionality is *not* necessary; one can be morally responsible for unintended effects.⁵

Thus, although Forst’s answer to the first of the three questions about how structural power works (his claim that structural power is narratively constructed) is compelling, his response to the second (his claim that structural power always works through cognition) falls short. For related reasons, his response to the third question is partial in a way that renders it misleading. On his view, because every social order is an order of justification, it can be dismantled through forms of critique that challenge its legitimacy. What is needed in order to change structural relations of power is simply critical analysis, combined with intersubjective deliberative processes that target the justifications that support the relevant structures. In Forst’s words, ‘The real site of power struggles ... is the discursive realm’ (Forst 2017, p. 46). Surely he is correct that challenging justificatory narratives and articulating alternatives is one important component of the process of structural change. But if it were the only necessary step, then the mid-century scientific and normative challenges to the racial narrative of the ‘true American’ – challenges that were largely successful at the level of discourse – should have dismantled the American racial order. Telling better stories is often one important component of structural change. But structural change requires, not just articulating, but also institutionalizing and objectifying new justificatory narratives.

3. Stories, institutions and spaces

In my own work, I have thought about structural power as a network of collective norms that are, to varying degrees,

- (1) institutionalized,
- (2) objectified,
- (3) internalized as motivational systems, and
- (4) embodied as what Bourdieu (1977) calls relatively enduring dispositions (*habitus*) (see, for example, Hayward 2000, 2013).

Whereas Forst draws almost exclusively on Habermasian critical theory, I have been influenced by feminist and anti-racist theory, as well. For example, I am largely persuaded by Sally Haslanger’s (2012, ch. 15) claim that agents internalize structures of the sort that interest Forst in the form of intersubjectively shared perceptual and cognitive dispositions, or ‘schemas.’⁶ On Haslanger’s view, schemas

... are embodied in individuals as a shared cluster of open-ended dispositions to see things a certain way or to respond habitually in particular circumstances. Schemas encode knowledge

and also provide scripts for interaction with each other and with our environment. (Haslanger 2012, p. 415)

The idea is close to the Bourdieuan notion of *habitus* (cited above). Schemas are, not idiosyncratic habits that individuals form independently, but instead patterns that are socially produced and intersubjectively shared. To the extent that Haslanger departs from Bourdieu, it is in her emphasis on agents' capacities to act in ways that challenge and change extant schemas, both for themselves and for others. In her words: 'We are not simply cogs in structures and practices of subordination, we enact them. And something about how we represent the world is both a *constitutive part of* that enactment and *keeps it going*' (Haslanger 2012, p. 411, emphasis in original).⁷ In other words, there is a mutual constitution between social structures and social schemas: an important insight that is missing from *Normativity and Power*.

In order to explain the difference this insight makes, I want to expound briefly on each of the four ideas in the numbered list at the start of this section.

1. To begin, when norms are *institutionalized*, they are built into rules, laws and other institutional forms, which distribute rewards and sanctions that reinforce them. As argued in the second section, for example, the US FHA did not simply tell a story that justified racial segregation. It also distributed rewards – in this case, federal subsidies for mortgage insurance – to white home buyers who, whether or not they endorsed that narrative, acted *as if* they did. And it meted out penalties – the denial of state-backed mortgages – to those who did not.

2. When social norms are *objectified*, they are 'condensed' (to recall the term Forst uses) in a different manner. At points in his book, Forst does use the word 'objectified' (for example, (Forst 2017, p. 44), but he uses it loosely. In his lexicon, 'objectified' seems to function as a synonym for 'structural'. I use 'objectified' more precisely to mean 'built into object form', or built into material form. The difference is important, because when social actors experience object forms (as opposed to institutionalized norms, like rules) they experience them *corporeally*. They do not *cognize* them, that is to say. They do not know them with their minds, so much as encounter them with the muscles and the nerves and the tendons that make up human bodies. People learn objectified social norms as they engage in practical activity: as they drive to and from work, as they socialize with others in their communities, as they drop their children off at school and pick them up in the evening. The black American ghetto, as that physical space was constructed over the early decades of the twentieth century, is an example of a politically significant material form. Another is the all-white postwar suburb, for example, the racially exclusive Levittowns that were built in the postwar years with financial backing from the FHA.

3. When social norms are institutionalized, they define incentive structures, which agents internalize as motivational systems. Recall that the white homebuyer who wants a government-backed mortgage *must* buy in a racially segregated community. Postwar white buyers responded to this incentive by moving en masse to new the housing that was built with generous federal subsidies in the new white suburbs that cropped up outside cities like my adoptive home of St. Louis, Missouri.

4. When norms are objectified, competent social actors master them practically. They learn to conform to the norms that justification narratives initially helped create, that is to say, not only through conscious decisions to obey laws or to abide by rules, and not only through the ideological acceptance that Forst calls 'a "second nature" of acting', but also

through a kind of practical know-how that powerfully supplements cognition. Bourdieu characterizes this know-how as ‘a feel for the game.’ ‘Action guided by a “feel for the game,”’ he writes, ‘has all the appearance of the rational action that an impartial observer, endowed with all the necessary information and capable of mastering it rationally, would deduce.’ He continues:

And yet, it is not based on reason. You need only think of the impulsive decision made by the tennis player who runs up to the net to understand that it has nothing in common with the learned construction that the coach, after analysis, draws up in order to explain it and deduce communicable lessons from it. (Bourdieu 1990, p. 11)

Similarly, you need only visit a racialized urban or suburban neighborhood of the sort that comprise the hypersegregated St. Louis metropolitan area to understand that the common sense of racial practice can be taught and learned extra-discursively. A person can come to know that she is ‘out of place,’ that is, even before – indeed, even without – *thinking* she is, whether that thinking is reflective or ideological.

In short, Forst’s reference to ‘everyday practice and processes of socialization’ glosses over important distinctions that are crucial to understanding how structural power works. Structural power does not simply ‘limit what can be imagined as possible.’ It also renders some social actions, in fact, impossible, and others highly improbable, through the distribution of rewards and sanctions, and through the construction of material forms that people encounter in ‘everyday practice.’ Social agents can internalize institutionalized and/or objectified justificatory narratives, like the racial narrative of the ‘true American,’ and they can do so without accepting, even unreflectively, the ‘ideas about property ... fairness, desert, and the like’ that constitute those narratives.

What is more, agents can internalize institutionalized or objectified justificatory narratives in cases in which no powerful agent intentionally induces that effect. Imagine a white, middle-class, twenty-first century St. Louisian who, other things equal, prefers to live in a racially integrated neighborhood, but who nevertheless moves to one of St. Louis’s racially exclusive white suburbs, because the schools and other public services in the economically constrained city perform significantly more poorly than do their counterparts in predominantly white enclaves. Such a person is *privileged* by the racially inegalitarian structural context that she inhabits. She is also *complicit* in its reproduction, since her decision to move to the affluent, white suburb interacts with institutionalized and objectified norms in a way that helps reinforce structural racial injustice. But she is not *powerful* in the sense in which Forst wants to use that word. She does not intentionally exercise power over others to create a desired effect. Nor would it be right to say that those who wrote St. Louis’s racial zoning ordinance a hundred years earlier, or those who enforced FHA underwriting standards in the mid-twentieth century, intended to exercise power over this twenty-first century St. Louisian.

A standard definition of structural power is one according to which some actors (here, those who are adversely but indirectly affected by the white homebuyer’s action) suffer ‘systematic threat of domination or deprivation of the means to develop and exercise their capacities’ as the result of multiple, large-scale social processes, which interact to create patterned inequalities that no identifiable agent directs, controls, or intends (Young 2011, p. 52, see also Hayward 2017). To claim it is ‘more appropriate to speak of “influence” rather than “power” in cases where power is not intentionally exercised by persons over others’ is to misunderstand how structural power shapes social action. Institutionalized and objectified

justification narratives can enable some agents to exercise power over others. In other words, they can define inter-agentive relations of domination and subordination. They also can differentially enable and constrain social action by defining relations of power that are structural in form. These two sets of effects are analytically distinct. A critical theory that aims 'to explain the power of structures' must address, not just the former, but also the latter.

4. Conclusion

In this essay, I have made the case that social structures work not only *through*, but also *around* human cognition. When what Rainer Forst calls 'justification narratives' are institutionalized, they constrain and enable action by shaping incentive structures. When they are objectified in material form, they constrain and enable action through practical/corporeal experience. To be sure, as Forst argues, humans are 'beings who tell stories'. But we are also beings who pursue our constructed interests, and who embody social common sense. I have departed from Forst's argument in *Normativity and Power*, then. But I have done so, as I hope he and other critical theorists will recognize, in the spirit of attempting to aid his project of 'explain[ing] the power of structures'.

By way of conclusion, let me return to the narrative of the 'true American' as told by Donald Trump and his supporters, both within his administration and among the American populace at large. If Forst were right, if '[t]he real site of power struggles [was] the discursive realm', then the task at hand for those who oppose Trump and Trumpism would be relatively straightforward. It would be to critique Trump's justification narratives: to show that what Trump says is factually incorrect, and that the claims that he makes are normatively illegitimate. That would not be difficult! As of this writing, just months into Trump's administration, there has been an enormous outpouring from liberals and progressives in 'the discursive realm'. In the American and the international press, for example, on radio and television and in other popular media outlets, in online forums, and in countless town hall meetings across the US, public officials, scholars, writers, journalists, and ordinary citizens have challenged Trump's narrative of the true American, making the case for a better – a more factually correct, as well as a more just – story of peoplehood. These efforts, alone, will not be enough. As I have argued elsewhere, structural change requires more than simply telling better stories (see Hayward 2013, pp. 187–202). It requires strategically targeting key institutions and reconstructing the material forms that shape social action, *regardless* of the stories people tell and the justifications they endorse. The task at hand for those who oppose Trump is a larger task than Rainer Forst's account suggests. It is nothing short of forging a political coalition that crosses class- and race-based divisions to alter the ways Americans embody – and the ways we enact – the structures that comprise our social order.

Notes

1. Pettit has moved away from this view in more recent work, acknowledging that inter-agentive domination 'is often possible only because of the practices and institutions of the wider society and world: the culture, economy, or constitution under which a people live' (Pettit 2014, p. 53).
2. The quote is from a commentary published in the *Chicago Tribune*. See Grossman (1989, p. 169). The discussion in this section of the early twentieth century racial narrative of American peoplehood draws on Hayward (2013, ch. 2).

3. It was during this era that scientists converged on a new understanding of what, in the nineteenth century, had been held to be unchanging, and categorical, racial differences: differences that could be read off phenotypical variations among people. By the new view, differences in skin color, hair texture, and the like were the product of slow genetic shifts, which themselves were produced by evolutionary processes that unfolded in geographically (and hence reproductively) isolated subpopulations. See Banton (1998).
4. The first racial zoning ordinance was passed in Baltimore in 1910. Soon after, the state of Virginia passed an act enabling cities to zone comprehensively according to race, and a host of Virginia cities and towns, including Norfolk, Richmond and Roanoke passed racial zoning laws. So did Birmingham, Dallas, Louisville, St. Louis and other American cities, especially in the South. Seven years after the first racial zoning law was passed, the US Supreme Court ruled that racial zoning violates the Fourteen Amendment. See *Buchanan v. Warley* (1917).
5. Lukes ([1974] 2005, pp. 41, 42) characterizes the common assumption that power's exercise is necessarily intentional as an 'unfortunate' assumption that is 'built into our language' and writes: 'I propose to abandon [this assumption] and to speak of the exercise of power ... whether [conscious] or not'.
6. In developing the notion of 'schemas', Haslanger draws on Sewell (1992).
7. Haslanger underscores that, in a given social context, there is never a single social reality. Instead there are multiple social 'worlds', or 'milieus', which are constituted by and constitutive of corresponding schemas. Hence, even if there is a dominant social reality, which is internalized at least partly by most of the people whose social relations it governs, there are also different milieus and hence different norms, conventions and standards, which define schemas that depart from and perhaps compete those that are dominant.

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Clarissa Rile Hayward is a contemporary political theorist whose research and teaching focus on theories of power, democratic theory, theories of identity and American urban politics. Her most recent book, *How Americans Make Race: Stories, Institutions, Spaces* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), was co-winner of the American Political Science Association's prize for the Best Book in Urban Politics. Hayward is also author of *De-Facing Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2000) and co-editor (with Todd Swanstrom) of *Justice and the American Metropolis* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011). She spent the 2017–2018 academic year as a Fellow in Residence at the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University working on a new book, tentatively titled *This is What Democracy Looks Like!*

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